

Roger Madsen
Task Force Team Leader
c/o Idaho Department of Labor
317 West Main Street
Boise, Idaho 83735

Dear Mr. Madsen,

In response to Governor Kempthorn's request for suggestions from Idaho State employees concerning how State government may more efficiently use our limited financial resources, I submit the following thoughts on one of government's largest expenditures - providing medical insurance benefits to employees.

In our office there are several employees who regularly use their breaks and lunch hours to exercise. These employees are rarely absent because of sickness. I believe that national health surveys support a direct correlation between wellness and a healthy lifestyle, including exercise. Would the State not be financially ahead to encourage their employees to begin or sustain an exercise program?

In population centers such as Boise, Twin Falls, Pocatello, etc., there are many State employees and it may be possible to acquire discount packages for employees from the local fitness centers, municipal pools, recreation centers and YFCAs. This, in conjunction with other incentives such as education, contests, etc., could make for a healthier work force and perhaps smaller increases in health benefit premiums for the State.

I understand that this would not be a policy that would reap immediate financial savings, but it would seem that if this type of program had been initiated ten years ago we would now be seeing the effects. And a number of similar savings could have certainly helped the State ride out the current downturn in the economy.

I thank you for this opportunity for input, and for your consideration of my suggestion.



Vikie Hancock
Department of Water Resources

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DIRECTOR